shall view God forever, how vivid must not Mary’s perception of God be—Mary—whose soul is whiter that the faces of the Seraphs?

Other saints have had characteristic virtues. Mary is the personification of every virtue. Her faith, which was scarcely less than Vision, was not greater than her Hope, which was absolute certainty, while her charity for God was the moving principle of her life, and the proximate cause of her death. Her obedience was perfect, for her will was identified with the Will of God; her patience under suffering was superhuman; her poverty was perfect—only think of the stable, and her years of dependence upon John during the later years of her life. In a word, Mary spoke her vows in the Temple. They were the first notes of a life-hymn, whose music sounded strangely pleasing in the ears of God; it drew Him down from Heaven; it will hold Him spellbound for eternity, and in saying all this, I am but paraphrasing the words of Gabriel, “Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you.”

They say that it was the foreknowledge of the dignity to which God would raise our nature by assuming it in the Incarnation that so scandalized Lucifer and his fellows that they rebelled and were lost. I think that if he could see Mary today near the same Sacred Humanity of Jesus in Heaven his angelic pride would be doubly offended. Angelic natures in Heaven; lost Angelic natures in Hell; human nature upon earth; but human nature, too, most highly honored in Heaven. Angelic natures confirmed in glory on heaven; Angelic natures hopelessly lost in Hell. Men struggling between both on earth.

But two human hands ever uplifted before the face of God in Heaven, and a face upturned to Him, on which He cannot look without emotion. Neither can we, my beloved, look upon it without hope. If I had only a certainty that those hands were ever uplifted for me in Heaven, or that the voice of the Mother ever pleaded for me with her Son, I should not envy the angels their confirmed glory, or the security of their bliss. Reign on! Great Queen! Draw thy bright mantle around thee! Fix the star-diadem on thy head! Royalty, even though it be the Royalty of Heaven, shall be to thee no sinecure. Thou hast us and a whole world yet to save!

*Libanus: as a geographic designation, is the mountain range that extends across the whole country of Lebanon. Used in the O.T. as a metaphor for royal dignity and majesty.

Note: It is believed that the Virgin Mary spent her last years in the vicinity of Ephesus and that she had died there.

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Pamphlet 426

The Death of Mary

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They say that at the hour of death the mind is empowered to cast one great retrospective glance over its life, and that glance comprehends every thought, every word, every action, in their minutest details.

If it be so, what a strange panorama was that which passed before the eyes of Mary. The quiet days in the Temple, the little room at Nazareth lighted up by the presence of an angel, the few words that were spoken, and the mighty ineffable mystery that was accomplished that evening on the hills of Judea, when Elizabeth came to meet her, and saluted her as the Mother of God, and she herself in the exuberance of her gratitude, broke out under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, into the sublime strains of the Magnificat; the horror that filled her soul when Simeon revealed to her at what a terrible cost she had become the Mother of Him that was to be crucified for His people, the desolation and the sorrow of the three days she was separated from Jesus; every painful circumstance connected with the flight into Egypt—the hurried preparation, the cries of the children, the wailing of the mothers, the silent, weary journey on the desert, the strange Egyptian faces in Heliopolis; that day in Cana, when to please her, Jesus anticipated His time and broke through the eternal decree; the three years’ missionary life, and the crowning sorrow on Calvary.

Yes! Jesus dying in pain, and His Mother dying in peace. Jesus dying friendless, forsaken; and Mary surrounded by the princes of the Church; the dying eyes of Jesus see only the faces of the infuriated mob, distorted with passion and eloquent of the hate they bear him; the dying eyes of the Mother see tender, reverent faces, wet with the tears that show how they
loved her; the ears of the dying Jesus hear only the execrations of the multitude, and “Vah! Vah! Come down from the Cross, and we will believe in Thee”; the ears of the dying Mother are open to sounds of heavenly rejoicing, and she learns that it is a gal day in Heaven, and that all the rejoicings are for her; over the cross of Jesus, the terrible face of the Father is bending in His anger, until the dying Son is forced to expostulate, “Why have You forsaken me?” Over the couch of the Mother is bending the most Holy Trinity, the Father whose omnipotence created her, the Spirit, whose love espoused her, the Son, her own Divine Son—she thinks she remembers those features—but it occurs to her that in all this there must be something wrong; that it scarcely befits the Mother to die as a Queen, and the Son to die as a criminal; the creature to die in peace, and the creator to die writhing in agony. But then Jesus will have it so; the life of His Mother has been a long martyrdom on His account. Her end at least shall be in peace.

No earthly thought mars her anticipated vision of Heaven, no earthly affection makes her parting from the earth feel bitter; she has been in the world, but she has not been of the world; she has walked over the earth without touching it; human affections she has had, but they have been centered in God; her every thought has been of God; her every wish has been to please God; her every desire has been a clo centered in God; her every thought has been of God; her every desire has been a center for eternity. The passion is past and gone; come form Libanus* my spouse, come from Libanus and thou shall be crowned,” and Jesus takes the soul of His Mother to Heaven, and the Apostles are weeping around the dead body of their Queen.

Of the glory of the Mother of God in Heaven it is difficult to form even an idea; yet by comparison we may learn it by approximation. If “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, if it has not entered into the heart of man to conceive what God has prepared for those who love Him,” what must heaven be to Her whose love for God surpassed in intensity the loves of all men and angels. If the measure of our merit upon earth shall be the measure of our happiness in Heaven, who shall presume to set bounds to the happiness of Her, whose least action was meritorious, for it was directed to the greater glory of God? If the happiness of Heaven is proportioned to the plenitude wherewith the Beatific Vision is revealed, what must not the happiness of Mary be, for as assuredly God will hide very little of His perfection from His Mother? If the purity of our lives here below will give us a clearer vision of God’s infinite attributes in Heaven, if the sanctity of our own Souls will be the medium through which we